

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Eastville Mercantile

other names/site number Eastville Drugstore DHR File Number 214-5001 Potential Eastville Historic District DHR File Number 214-0040

**2. Location**

street & number 16429 Courthouse Road not for publication N.A.

city or town Eastville

state Virginia code VA county Northampton code 131 Zip 23347

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination      request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets      does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant      nationally      statewide X locally. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources**

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property      meets      does not meet the National Register criteria. (     See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:

     entered in the National Register

     See continuation sheet.

     determined eligible for the National Register

     See continuation sheet

     determined not eligible for the National Register

     removed from the National Register

     other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_



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Eastville Mercantile  
Eastville, Virginia, Northampton County

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER- MID 19<sup>TH</sup> C. VERNACULAR  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE PARGED OVER BRICK  
roof WOOD SHINGLE ON WOOD BATTENS  
walls WEATHERBOARD  
other CHIMNEY- BRICK  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☐ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations** (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
COMMERCE

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Period of Significance 1850- 1954

Significant Dates 1850  
Ca. 1910

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
N.A.

Cultural Affiliation N.A.

Architect/Builder JAMES LYONS

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

### 9. Major Bibliographical References

#### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

#### Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.  
☐ previously listed in the National Register  
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register  
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark  
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

#### Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office  
☐ Other State agency  
☐ Federal agency  
☐ Local government  
☐ University  
☐ Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

### 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 1.1

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing    Zone Easting Northing  
1 18 416212E 9134410N 2 \_\_\_\_\_  
3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

U. S. Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceEastville Mercantile  
Eastville, Virginia, Northampton County**11. Form Prepared By**name/title: JAMES CHARLES STURGISOrganization: ABC LLC date SEPTEMBER 17, 2004street & number: P. O. BOX 126 telephone 757 678 5183city or town EASTVILLE state VA zip code 23347**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name J. THOMAS SAVAGEstreet & number 2218 BELLVUE LANE telephone 757 331 1079city or town CAPE CHARLES state VA zip code 23310name GEORGE J SAVAGEstreet & number 2218 BELLEVUE LANE telephone 757 331 1079city or town CAPE CHARLES state VA zip code 23310

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

**Eastville Mercantile  
Eastville, Virginia Northampton County**

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**7. Summary Description:**

The Eastville Mercantile building is an expansively developed traditional Chesapeake Store located in the heart of Eastville, Northampton County, Virginia. It is a two-story frame building, 18' x 50', constructed ca. 1850.<sup>1</sup> It has a large rectangular sales room, a heated rear counting room and on the second floor, a large storage space in the front and a heated rear apartment. At least three windows, and possibly either a door or 4th window generously lighted the counting room. Two windows survive with all their fittings intact. The second floor was changed in the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to adjust circulation and to separate the front storeroom and the rear living quarters.

The interiors were originally painted except for the first floor sales room. There is much evidence remaining as to the layout for original mercantile shelving including some existing original material.

The exterior retains its original siding and windows without back band. Original windows are treated in the manner of other early 19<sup>th</sup> century stores. Flush panel shutters with thin beads are hung on strap hinges on plintles with screwed plates. Shutters are secured with a diagonal bar holding a bolt through the framed mortised inside, to receive a wedge, now secured with old horseshoes.

**Exterior:**

The building's front gable end faces Courthouse Road to the west. The gable has unadorned bargeboard. It has a single, center window in the attic with a second floor door underneath. This upstairs door, without exterior access, leads into the second floor storeroom. The ground floor, modified in the early 1900's, has a front facing display window located in front of 2 large double hung windows to allow light into the store area. To the right of this is a recessed double door with glass panels over wood raised panels. There is an overhang for protection from weather and the flooring is tongue and groove wood. Concrete steps for this main entrance extend onto the sidewalk, which passes in front of the building and property. The brick foundation has been parged with concrete to match.

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The north side of the building retains four of its original windows without back banding. The outline of a fifth window can be observed on the ground floor. The existing downstairs window retains its original flat panel shutters with cast iron cross member. The white wood clapboard is original, and is beaded. The remains of a 1940's billboard with incandescent light fixture above remain on the front corner. The bottom two boards have fallen away from the building, revealing the brick foundation and also the numbered beams of the post and beam construction. A brick chimney in common bond pattern, not original to the building, extends through the roof approximately two-thirds the distance to the back of the building. The roof has been covered with roll roofing to protect the original cedar shake roof.

The east gable end has twin attic windows, no second floor windows, and a single remaining first floor window with shutter and cross iron. There is no decorative beading on this side, and approximately half a dozen clapboards have fallen out of position. The building has settled so that the foundation is no longer visible, and the building now slopes down to the south.

The south side of the building is the most altered, having its first floor wall removed during an early 1900's addition. The second floor displays a vertical tongue and groove interior wall. Only a small portion of the original beaded siding can be observed at the ends of the building. A center doorway leads from the second floor storeroom to where the addition was removed. The protective roll roofing covers only half the roof, exposing the original cedar shake roof. Fragments of large flooring joists project from the first and second floor. Covering the large opening on the first floor where an addition was removed are 4 by 8 sheets of particle board.

**Interior:**

The third floor interior has a single 6 over 6 wooden sash west facing gable window and two smaller east facing gable windows. Random width wide planks are used for flooring. The underneath of a full cedar shake roof can be seen. It is held in place on roof rafters that are pegged at top, with no ridge beam. Dovetail collar beams brace these rafters.

The second floor consists of a main front storeroom, a small passage room and a plastered small rear room. A winder stair rises along the south wall of this center passage to the attic. HL hinges

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underneath these steps hold a vertical planked door that gives access to a small storage area. Reused from a previous building on site, ca. 1789, hand-hewn lumber can be seen supporting the steps from within. Rough mill sawn boards wall to the front of the building divides the rooms, and a planed board wall to the back of the building. Both interior walls include a large double-sheathed door with large HL hinges. On exterior walls, three north facing windows, evidence of three south facing windows, and one west facing door can be seen. The outline of the showroom access can be seen in the front storeroom floor.

The ground floor is the least intact of the three levels. The foundation and sill has considerable damage due to weathering, and most of the south wall is missing, a result of an early twentieth-century addition now removed. Ceiling joists, however, are intact and are double beaded. Hand-planed beaded flooring can also be observed. Cut nails used for hanging merchandise protrude from most ceiling joists. The north wall is sheathed with flush mounted wooden boards secured with mature cut nails. Two of the original windows remain intact with shutters. Floor joists and flooring are now missing due to deterioration, and long braces now tie the north and south walls together to help stabilize the building. Ghosting on the rear wall gives evidence of the lathe and plaster wall in the counting room, while outlines of store shelving can be observed on the north wall.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Summary Description:

The Eastville mercantile building is an expansively developed traditional Chesapeake store.<sup>2</sup> Typical of this vernacular form, the building has evolved over time to adapt itself to the varying needs of the local community. Through this, it has retained its historic fabric and is rich in architectural details through out. Construction features including pegged roof rafters, double beaded ceiling joists with display hardware, mercantile hatch between second floor store room and first floor sales room, roman numerated beams to aid in construction, shuttered windows without back band, and two double sheathed doors with original hinges are some of the many architectural elements of the building that make it eligible under criteria C for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

**Criteria C: That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.**

The Eastville Mercantile site and building have at different times been used for a storage building,<sup>3</sup> tavern,<sup>4</sup> hardware store, dry cleaners,<sup>5</sup> residence,<sup>6</sup> dance hall<sup>7</sup> and most recently a drug store. Located in the center of town, Eastville Mercantile is a testament to local tendencies of adaptive reuse. Originally built as a store by Mr. Jacob Lyons, the Eastville Mercantile building was reconstructed in the middle of the nineteenth century using materials from this store building. Courthouse deeds show the building's new use to be a tavern. It consisted of a two-story frame store, measuring 18'2" by 50'5".<sup>8</sup> It was located on the southeast corner of the intersection of the main street, now Courthouse Road, and the crossroad, now Willow Oak Road. The front steps and stoop, known as Buzzard's roost, were a place to congregate and discuss current events.<sup>9</sup>

In the beginning of the twentieth century the Eastern Shore was experiencing a booming economy.<sup>10</sup> At this time the structure was moved next door to the southern adjacent lot making room for another commercial building to be built on the southern corner.<sup>11</sup> Study of saw marks indicates some additional lumber was required in the reassembly of the building. Then as now, the building

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consisted of a large unheated ground floor salesroom with storeroom over top. It retained its original dimensions. A smaller ground floor room was located in the rear of the building and used as a counting room. Steps gave access to a small room upstairs, a second small room used as a passage room, and the large storeroom. Unlike the back rooms, both the storeroom and the sales room have double beaded ceiling joists, a late use of such a feature. The community prospered and grew with the incorporation of a farmers' marketing association, known as the Eastern Shore Produce Exchange. This dramatically increased the produce shipped from the shore and the area's affluence.<sup>12</sup> By 1910, the building was altered to include large storefront windows and an addition to the south tripled the footprint of the structure. This added space allowed the downstairs sales room to be expanded to more than double its original size, and a hardware store was located in the balance of the first floor space. Glass display windows matched the northern section of the building.

Two utilitarian, one story metal additions were added to the rear of the building to store feed and hay for livestock. By 1921, Accomack and Northampton counties were the two richest agricultural counties in the United States.<sup>13</sup> The community's need for evening activities caused the space above the hardware store to be converted to a dance hall. By the mid 1940's, livestock was phased out as gasoline powered tractors replaced them. A dry cleaners and presser shop was located in the southern-most addition,<sup>14</sup> replacing the feed and seed storage. A plat dated December 1968 shows the building fully expanded.<sup>15</sup> Farming, which was a major portion of the area's economy, declined, and with it, so did the area's ability to support local businesses.<sup>16</sup> The number of small businesses dwindled, and so did the footprint of the structure. By 1970, both of the rear metal additions were in poor repair and demolished. The southern addition also suffered from lack of maintenance, and in July 2001, the front wall began to collapse into the street. It was removed as a hazard to public safety. It is especially important to note that in spite of these additions and demolitions only the south facing first floor wall of the original building was lost in the process.

The original structure has been temporarily secured with roll roofing material over the original cedar shake roof. Particleboard has closed up the missing ground floor wall. Braces have been placed between foundation beams to help stabilize the building.

By 2000, the Eastern Shore had been rediscovered, and a huge building boom began. Real-estate prices rose dramatically, and a need for more business floor space in the county seat was realized. Once again, the community is looking toward the Eastville Mercantile building for assistance.

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Endnotes

1. Edward A. Chappell, Colonial Williamsburg study, *The Eastville Pharmacy* (Williamsburg, Virginia, June 2004). Virginia DHR Archives.
2. John Paul Hanbury, interview by author, Eastville, Virginia, 17 February 2004.
3. *Northampton County Deed Book 22*, 171.
4. *Northampton County Deed Book 41*, 531.
5. Elizabeth S. Sturgis, interview by author, Eastville, Virginia, 18 July 2004.
6. Mayor Edgar S. Sturgis, III, interview by author, Eastville, Virginia, 18 July 2004.
7. Mrs. Lloyd Nottingham, interview by author, Eastville, Virginia, 10 July 2004.
8. Edward A. Chappell, Colonial Williamsburg study, *The Eastville Pharmacy* (Williamsburg, Virginia, June 2004). Virginia DHR Archives.
9. Robert S. Burton, *Eastville's Historical Commercial Buildings* (Nassawadox, Virginia, May 1975). Eastern Shore Public Library.
10. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, *Fifty Years of Service 1953-2003* (Onancock, Virginia: Eastern Shore News, 2003), 4.
11. Edward A. Chappell, Colonial Williamsburg paper, *The Eastville Pharmacy* (Williamsburg, Virginia, June 2004). Virginia DHR Archives.
12. Norma Miller Turman, *The Eastern Shore of Virginia 1603 – 1964* (Parksley: Eastern Shore News, Inc., 1964), 209.
13. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, 4,5.
14. Mayor Edgar S. Sturgis, III.
15. *Northampton County Plat Book 6*, 77.
16. The Eastern Shore of Virginia Chamber of Commerce, 8.

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**Bibliography**

Burton, Robert Stewart. *Eastville's Historical Commercial Buildings* Nassawadox:  
Eastern Shore Public Library, 1975.

Chappell, Edward A. *The Eastville Pharmacy* Williamsburg: Virginia DHR Archives,  
June 2004.

Eastern Shore Chamber of Commerce. *Fifty Years of Service 1953-2003*. Melfa: Eastern  
Shore Public Library, 2003.

Hanbury, John Paul. Interview by author. Eastville, Virginia, 23 August 2004.

*Northampton County Deed Book 22.*

*Northampton County Deed Book 41.*

*Northampton County Plat Book 6.*

Nottingham, Mrs. Lloyd. Interview by author. Eastville, Virginia, 23 August 2004.

Sturgis, III, Mayor Edgar S. Interview by author. Eastville, Virginia, 23 August 2004.

Sturgis, Elizabeth S. Interview by author. Eastville, Virginia, 23 August 2004.

Turman, Nora Miller. *The Eastern Shore of Virginia 1603 – 1964*. Onancock: Eastern Shore  
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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

ON EAST SIDE OF COURTHOUSE ROAD, 64.37 FEET SOUTH OF WILLOW OAK ROAD, BEGINNING AT VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS CONCRETE MONUMENT, GO 96.03 FEET S 60°31'56"E TO SURVEY PIN. FROM PIN, 84.76 FEET S16°56'48"W TO SECOND SURVEY PIN. FROM PIN, 111.33' N62°22'37"W TO THIRD SURVEY PIN AT EDGE OF SIDEWALK, THEN 26.7' N27°35'39"E TO FOURTH SURVEY PIN, FINALLY 60.02' N28°38'12"E TO ORIGINAL CONCRETE MONUMENT. PARCEL CONTAINS 1.1 ACRES.

Boundary Justification

This boundary was chosen because it incorporates the property historically associated with and currently retained by the Eastville Mercantile building.